



LADIES!
DARE TO BE FEMININE!

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As everyone has certainly noticed, over the past number of years girls' clothing has become skimpier and skimpier — some call it “pedophile chic” — while boys' shirts and pants have become baggier and baggier — some call it “prison garb.”

Naturally, a reaction is underway. A quick Internet search for “modest clothing” reveals that there is a fast-growing niche of specialty fashion designers and seamstresses producing clothing for young men and women, clothing that is modest and truly beautiful.

Recently, a fashion model has described her experiences and observations in a book entitled, *Dressing with Dignity*. In it, author Colleen Hammond writes in a very personal, revealing, conversational tone; but, most important, it is an excellent catechesis on virtue, modesty, and femininity, and it deserves a wide readership.

From the first paragraph:

“My journey to modest fashions has been a very, *very* long one. I fell away from the Christian faith in college, when I needed it the most. I was modeling and acting to put myself through college — not the most Christian of industries. . . .

“My return to the faith is a long and tragic story, but when I did return, you wouldn't be able to tell I was a Christian by how I was dressed.”

The book is a very personal appeal for young women — and men, for that matter — to wake up and understand how the fashion industry is manipulating them, degrading them, and warring against nature and the way God made men and women to complement each other.

Here are some excerpts to give a flavor of this very important book,

clothing, speak like men, and do their jobs. In other words, to be something we aren't and were never created to be. What's wrong with being feminine?

“When we hear the word ‘femininity’, we normally think about how a woman speaks, moves, and dresses. In other words, her outer appearance.

“A feminine woman is charming, gentle, and tender. She has a sweet disposition, is joyful and spunky, but doesn't mind being dependent on a man for some things.

“Genuine, God-given femininity appeals to men. It stirs up in them their genuine, innate masculinity and the desire to protect, revere, and defend the gentle sex. It also awakens a feeling of awe, tenderness, and enchantment in a man and brings him peace and happiness.”



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of things, men are attracted to women, not another guy. Opposites attract! And principled men are quick to encourage women to be proud of the woman God created them to be.

“It’s an amazing fact that virtuous and moral women with compassion attract thoughtful men with character, patience, and generosity. In marriage, as a woman grows in virtues and her faith, ‘the unbelieving husband is sanctified’ as well.

“By the same token, badly behaving women will attract selfish, shallow, and immoral men.

“What do we want for our daughters? A thoughtful man with character, patience, and generosity? Or the amoral slob who’s only out for himself?

“Young men do not develop their social skills as easily or as early as young ladies. When they are in their teens, boys tend to be more comfortable around the gals who are a bit tomboyish.

“But as these same young men mature and are interested in courting, they are attracted to their exact opposite. Young men with character admire femininity, purity, charm, and a spunky, girlish playfulness. All of this awakens their chivalrous nature, and they develop a warm and loving desire to protect and shelter their maiden from harm. To adore her and cherish her. To be her knight in shining armor. . . .

“But we women are blind to our own female charms. The qualities we admire in other women are rarely attractive to men. What we ignore is sometimes just the characteristic that makes a principled man attracted to a good woman. . . .

“It is interesting to note that the feminist movement has violated the natural law in a big way. Instead of championing women’s femininity over manliness, it has unintentionally conceded the superiority of men by denying women their femininity and trying to make us wish we were all men! Feminists want us to wear men’s

A Supermodel’s Experience

In the first chapter, “Out of Eden,” Mrs. Hammond discusses the original “innocence” of Adam and Eve, and the concepts of “reverence” and “respect,” and observes:

“Turn on the television these days, and matters of human intimacy are treated as sources of humor. We hear the marital embrace being bandied about in nominal topics of conversation. We see sacred moments rendered as a joke on the afternoon talk shows. And worst of all, Hollywood emphasizes marital intimacy in a crass manner in movies aimed at teenagers. . . .

“And I think it’s pretty obvious that the fashions of today are all geared toward destroying a woman’s sensitivity for her femininity. Dr. Alice von Hildebrand told me once that when women no longer know how to blush, it is an indication that a society is on the verge of moral collapse. Sounds like we’re in a lot of trouble!

“Quite honestly, I think we women carry a heavy share of the guilt if we dress immodestly. If we don’t treat ourselves with respect, then how can we expect others to do so? By dressing immodestly, we betray our human and moral mission as a woman, which has been given to us by God.

“I used to be a model, and at times was asked to wear some pretty sleazy outfits. By the grace of God, I never had to actually wear anything that I now look back and regret wearing. But supermodel Kim Alexis had a different experience. . . .

“In her 1998 book, *A Model for a Better Future*, Kim shares that as a supermodel, she was constantly asked to compromise her moral standards. . . . Kim also says in her book that many women are playing with fire in the way they dress.

“Dressing like a floozy tells the world, ‘Look at me, want me, lust after me. I’m easy and you can have me.’ Displaying intimate parts of the body is a form of advertising for sex — so if you dress to

attract sexual attention, you can hardly blame anyone else if that kind of attention comes your way. But dressing modestly tells the world, 'I respect myself and I insist on being treated with respect.' It's possible to be stylish and attractive without wearing something that is too short, low-cut, or see-through.

"That's a supermodel's experience. But in my life as a mother of four in north Texas, I have also observed that when women are dressed in a feminine, modest, and dignified manner, men will treat them with respect and hold them in high regard. . . .

"Why do you think men treat women differently when they are dressed femininely?

"Because men are subconsciously very talented at reading a woman's body language. If they see a woman who dresses with dignity and who carries herself with grace and femininity, they pick up on that. They take their cue and approach us with the respect, reverence, and honor our gender deserves. It's also more enjoyable for a man to chat with a woman and appreciate her intelligence when she is dressed tastefully, because he's not distracted by her body.

"When a woman dresses with dignity, it appeals to a man's chivalrous nature. Femininity touches a man's heart and appeals to what is best in him. It makes him a gallant knight!"

Baser Passions

In chapter 2, "Return to Reverence and Respect," Mrs. Hammond explains how the reverence and respect men and women should have for each other was shattered by sin. In this context, she offers an interesting reflection on how the most precious elements of all God's creation are hidden and hard to get to, such as diamonds, pearls, and gold.

"You've got to work hard to get those things in nature that are precious and valuable.

"Our bodies are much more sacred than diamonds, pearls, and

gold! After all, we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Shouldn't our precious bodies be veiled and hidden from view?. . .

"Dr. Alice von Hildebrand pointed out to me that maybe one of the reasons St. Paul recommended that women's heads be veiled in church is because of the mystery and sacredness of women. It is a deeply meaningful custom that has, unfortunately for women, fallen by the wayside. . . .

"Now that I understand women's head coverings in church, I think that is a beautiful way of honoring the sacred calling and privilege of women. Once I 'got it' that it is an honor for women to be veiled (as all that is holy and sacred is veiled), I now wonder where I got the idea that wearing a veil in church is demeaning to women?..

". . . [I]mmodesty not only distracts our attention, it also reduces a lady to an object. It makes her appear less than the human person that she is. That's why today's advertising is primal, even revolting. Immodestly dressed women dominate advertising these days, and are obviously directed to the baser passions of men.

"The sexual decadence that we have witnessed in the course of the last few decades can be traced back, in part, to the fashion world's attempt to wipe out 'holy bashfulness.' The proper response that women should give to what is personal, intimate, and calls for veiling is to dress with dignity.

"But the fashions of today are all geared toward destroying women's sensitivity for the dignity of our gender."

Countercultural Ladies

Chapter 5 is titled "Return to Femininity," and Mrs. Hammond offers the girls some practical advice:

"Ladies: It's time for us to be countercultural!

"We should bring to life our womanliness, which in turn will let our men magnify their masculinity. After all, in the normal scheme